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— as British as the Flag

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PUNCH



DECEMBER

16
1942Vol. CCIII
No. 5313

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"Triplex"— the safety glass

Regd.

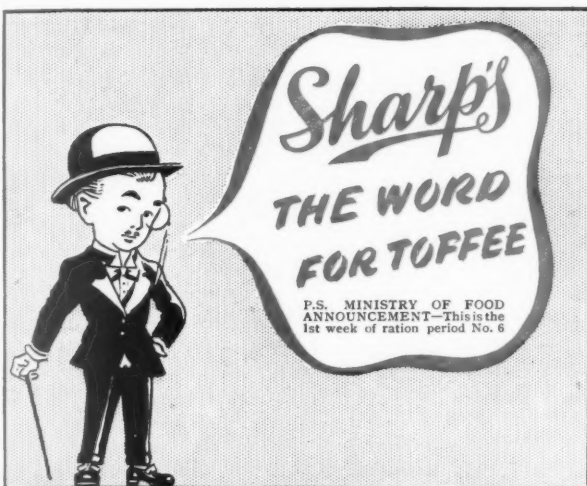
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'Utility' to many people has become a war-time term even possessing its own trade mark, but the Oxford Dictionary describes Utility as "usefulness, profitableness." Springs are utility products in peace or war in any industry, new or old, when designed and produced by The Tempered Spring Co., Ltd.



**THE TEMPERED
SPRING CO LTD**
ATTERCLIFFE ROAD · SHEFFIELD



FUEL ECONOMY HINT

**GO TO BED
EARLY**



EDWARD SHARP & SONS LTD. MAIDSTONE



A WARMING, comforting cup of 'Ovaltine' is a delicious prelude to the night's duty. Its concentrated nourishment—derived from Nature's finest foods—strengthens, energises and sustains.

When duty is done and opportunity comes for rest, you will find 'Ovaltine' a soothing influence and a great help in quickly inducing sleep. Moreover, the special nutritive properties of 'Ovaltine' assist in making your sleep fully restorative and revitalising.

By day or night, whenever there is work to be done, strength to maintain and energy to conserve, make 'Ovaltine' your constant stand-by. It will do much to reinforce your resistance against the chills and ills of wintry weather, and to keep up your fitness-for-service.

'Ovaltine' is easily and quickly prepared. If milk is not available, water can be used, as 'Ovaltine' itself contains milk. 'Ovaltine' also has the advantage of being naturally sweet so that there is no need to add sugar.

Delicious

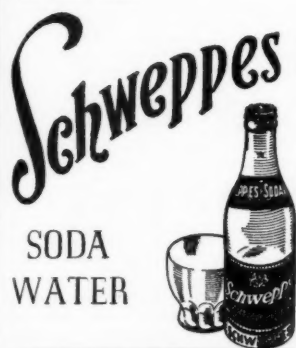
OVALTINE

The Best Stand-by Food Beverage

P.600A



A young man is judged to have reached the age of discretion when he begins to call for



HELP NEEDED

by the
SALMON LANE MISSION
whose voluntary workers have laboured for 52 years among the poor of Limehouse, East London.
Please send a Christmas Gift to
E. Percy Dennis, Hon. Supt., Minister,
57 Ethelbert Gardens, Ilford, Essex.

QUEEN ANNE

RARE SCOTCH WHISKY

**IN THE
BETTER PLACES**



By Appointment

Holders of Royal Appointment to successive Sovereigns since 1838

HILL THOMSON & CO. LTD
EDINBURGH. Est. 1793

LOOK AFTER THOSE SUEDE SHOES

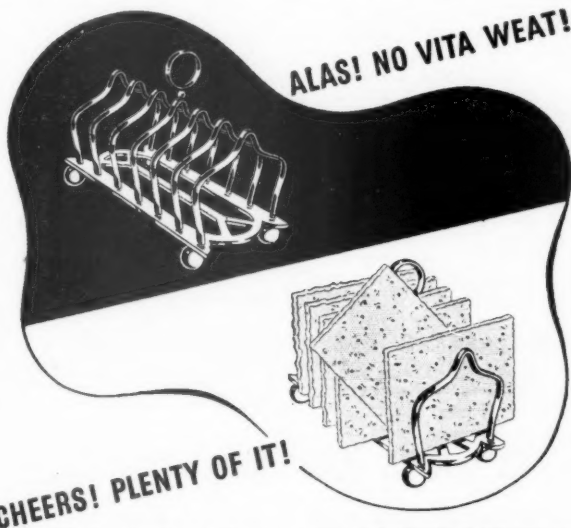
Coupons and higher prices make it a sad day when you have to superannuate your suede shoes, so it's good to know that Meltonian Suede Cleaner makes them stay young longer—and smarter.

Meltonian Suede Cleaner is the enemy of those shiny spots, and always keeps the suede soft and supple.

Use it regularly and you can be proud of your old shoes for a long time yet.

Meltonian Suede Cleaner

Use Meltonian White Cream for polished leather of any colour.



ALAS! NO VITA WEAT!

CHEERS! PLenty OF IT!

If you live in the southern half of the country between Norfolk in the east and Cardiganshire in the west you can still enjoy Vita-Weat—Peck Frean's Crispbread—made from wheat grown in the English shires—packed with energising vitamins and with that

grand whole-wheat flavour in every crunchy mouthful. But Vita-Weat has forsworn long train journeys to save transport, so if you live in the North, well—it's just one of those good things that will come back to you with victory.

Vita-Weat REGD

PEEK FREAN'S CRISPBREAD • PACKETS 1/6 LOOSE 1/4 LB

**BRITISH
RAZOR BLADES
OF
OUTSTANDING
QUALITY**

Supplies now are strictly limited, but thousands more men will want Souplex, Double Six and Big Ben razor blades after the war.

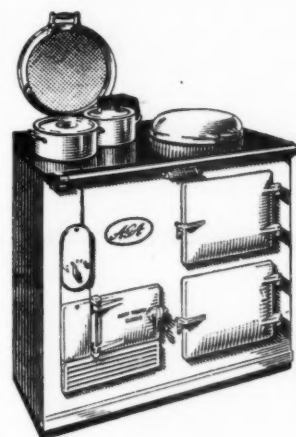


SOUPLEX
SOUPLEX LTD., MORECAMBE,
LANCS.

Where
there's an
AGA

Regd. Trade Mark

cooker



fuel is
saved for
certain

Guaranteed not to exceed a stated annual fuel consumption.



COKE IS THE IDEAL FUEL FOR AGA COOKERS. THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF COKE

AGA HEAT LIMITED

(Props: Allied Ironfounders Limited)

Coalbrookdale, Shropshire.

Put a damper on fuel-waste!

A large part of the average home's consumption of fuel goes in heating water, but a lot of good heat goes up the chimneys of badly-regulated boilers. Yet the average domestic boiler is scientifically designed and is capable of accurate adjustment.

What do I do?

I seek advice from the makers, or experiment myself, on the best setting of dampers to secure minimum fuel consumption. I do not fill the boiler to the top and then "open everything" to race the fire up. I remember that the patriotic fire—whether in the boiler or grate—is "low and slow."

Issued by the Ministry of Information
Space presented to the Nation by the Brewers' Society



"I'm going to hang on to my Wisdom toothbrush!"

HE'S got the right idea. You, too, should hang on to your Wisdom as long as you can. If you are in actual need of a new Wisdom, please ask for it, but if your chemist cannot supply, don't blame him as it is not his fault.

Please bear in mind that your chemist does not want to disappoint you, but some of the materials used in the manufacture of Wisdom Toothbrushes are 'on active service' with the R.A.F. We are, of course, making a limited number of brushes. As a Wisdom

will outlast three best bristle brushes, in buying one you can help to economise in the use of materials. If you are already using a Wisdom, you should take extra care of it by drying it after use, and not using it in hot water.



OUTLASTS 3 BEST BRISTLE BRUSHES

MADE BY ADDIS · THE MAKERS OF THE FIRST TOOTHBRUSH IN 1780

BALKAN SOBRANIE
CIGARETTES & TOBACCOS

More and less

When we ask you to smoke more of *Sobranie* Standard Mixture and less of *Balkan Sobranie* Pipe Tobaccos we do so without a qualm. No more supplies of the best leaf will be entering the country, and we are compelled to do something about it. That we are doing our best—let your favourite briar be the judge.



SOBRANIE LTD. LONDON, E.C.1

Are you keeping your RONSON 'lighting'-fit?

Ronson is the world's finest lighter. Every Ronson owner knows that. And a good thing is worth looking after well—particularly as no more Ronsons are available until after the war. So make sure that you are not spoiling the efficiency of yours—use only the best fuel and flints in it. Ronsonol is the finest lighter fuel you can buy because it does not clog the lighter nor does it smoke unpleasantly; Ronson Flints are specially shaped to fit Ronson Lighters. Both will keep your lighter always 'lighting'-fit.

If your Ronson needs servicing or a really minor repair, bring it into 112, Strand, where it will be dealt with promptly. Major repairs cannot be undertaken for the moment because the production of British-made repair parts has been held up. We hope, however, to be in a position shortly to accept every kind of repair, and as soon as our Repair Service is ready we shall announce the fact in this paper.



RONSON

RONSONOL FUEL
1/0½d, 1/6½d, 2/8d a bottle.
RONSON FLINTS 6 for 6d.
From dealers everywhere.

RONSON PRODUCTS LTD., 112, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2

IT'S A GOOD JOB
WE CHOSE **BROLAC**
BEFORE THE WAR...
THESE KITCHEN WALLS ARE
STILL AS BRIGHT AS NEW!



Owing to the control of essential raw materials, Brolac and Murac are not being manufactured to-day... and how thankful are users now for the quality and durability of these paints. To-day the high-grade materials and the skill of our chemists are employed in the service of the country... to-morrow they will once more play their part in making a brighter, better Britain.

BROLAC
DOUBLE PROTECTION PAINT
with the enamel finish
MURAC
FLAT FINISH FOR WALLS

John Hall & Sons (Bristol & London) Ltd.,
Broadmead, Bristol. London Office &
Warehouse: 1-5, St. Pancras Way, N.W.1.
The Strathclyde Paint Co. Ltd., Dalmar-
nock, Glasgow

PETROLE HAHN

For the Hair



• A perfect dressing and a sovereign specific against falling hair, scurf and dandruff. Promotes hair growth. Invigorates the scalp. Non-inflammable. From good Hairdressers and Chemists.
per bottle 4/4 & 6/6 (including increased tax)

Tri-ang
TOYS
FOR GIRLS AND BOYS
L.B. LTD. London

For your Silverware
use only
"Goddard's"
Plate Powder
or
Liquid Plate Polish



CHILPRUFE is still entirely PURE WOOL

The output of Chilprufe Pure Wool is now confined entirely to a limited range of essential garments for infants and children only.

Even so we regret an unavoidable shortage of supply. We are doing our utmost to maintain the traditional high standard, thus affording the maximum protection and durability so essential for young children.

CHILPRUFE LIMITED
Governing Director: JOHN A. BOLTON
LEICESTER

CHILPRUFE
Made Solely for
CHILDREN

WE ARE BUYERS OF SECOND-HAND JEWELS AND SILVER

WHY NOT SELL NOW AND INVEST IN GOVERNMENT SECURITIES?

James R.
Ogden
of London & Harrogate

42 DUKE STREET, ST. JAMES, S.W.1
36-40 JAMES STREET, HARROGATE

The "Antiquary"
Finest Scotch Whisky

OF RARE: DISTINCTION
WITH THE: RIGHT AGE
COMMANDING: RESPECT

Proprietors:
J. & W. HARDIE
SCOTLAND

Cephus *The safe & certain remedy*
FOR COLDS & FLU

"and Father Xmas too!"

THERE are so many things that aren't sure to-day. The tranquil pattern of childhood is twisted and marred by separations—insecurities—disappointments. Must the visit of Father Xmas be added to the list of things that "have to be done without in war-time"? Not if The Salvation Army can help it. And not if you help The Salvation Army!

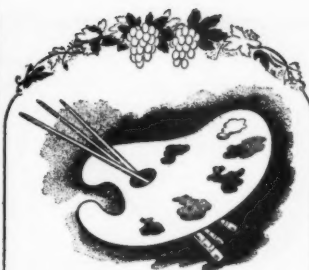
Thousands of children, old folk, homeless and lonely people will look to The Salvation Army for Christmas Cheer again this year. Will you please send a gift for the Christmas Fund to GENERAL CARPENTER, 101, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.4.



There'll be no more "Fortune" Chocolates until after the war as Caley's have put all their chocolate into service dress!

Norwich Plain Chocolate, in blocks 2½d.

CALEY

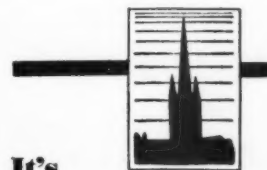


Ingredients for a Masterpiece..

... they're much the same anywhere. It's the genius of the artist that makes the picture. So also with a good Vermouth. White wine blended with herbs provides the universal basis. But how you blend decides the character of the wine. Votrix, because it is blended superbly, has made its name as a British Vermouth of unusual character and quite outstanding quality. It's in the true tradition... but entirely individual.

VOTRIX VERMOUTH

is produced at the Vine Products vineyard in Surrey but owing to the unavoidable wartime restriction of supplies you may often find it difficult to obtain. Votrix "Dry," bottle size 6/9. Votrix "Sweet," bottle size 6/3.



It's up to YOU now!

IT is even more vital now than in peacetime that you should be adequately insured—the need to protect dependents has increased, whilst property is more valuable and the cost of furniture has risen steeply.

BUT, with such a large proportion of our staff on service and many of our smaller branches closed for the duration, we can only render to policy-holders and prospective insurers that service for which we had a high reputation before the war IF WE HAVE YOUR CO-OPERATION.

This, however, is no reason for remaining uninsured and underinsured; an enquiry on this convenient coupon will bring for your consideration (but without obligation) full details of whatever class of insurance you need—fire, life, accident, etc.

NORWICH UNION INSURANCE SOCIETIES
P.O. Box 4, Surrey Street
NORWICH · NORFOLK

You may send me particulars of

Insurance.

M
Address
P7



The Priceless Biscuit

It is an odd reflection that, if the 'points' be lacking, not all the wealth of Ophir will suffice to purchase a single Romary Biscuit. And in a topsy-turvy world, where the cost of excellence in the new currency of 'points' is no more than that of mediocrity, the best becomes more than ever desirable.

We, no less than you, regret that in some parts of the country wartime necessity makes it impossible for you to buy Romary Biscuits. To those more fortunately placed, we would say: Romary Biscuits are still the supreme example of the art of biscuit craftsmanship and today the need for 'points' lays an additional emphasis upon quality.

ROMARY'S
'Tunbridge Wells' Biscuits

(Registered Trade Mark)

SAVE FUEL

Keep warm inside

with



Unexcelled
since 1706
for Quality

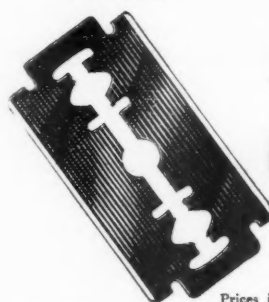


**CROSSE &
BLACKWELL'S**

MOCK TURTLE VEGETABLE KIDNEY MULLIGATAWNY CONSOMME

Old friends and new faces

Men of the United States and the United Kingdom find much that is new about each other — and much that is familiar. If we are charmed, for instance, to find old — almost Elizabethan — turns of phrase in their speech, are they not pleased to find their familiar friend Gillette in English guise, giving that same keen service "over here" that no Serviceman anywhere would be without?



Gillette
SAVES STEEL

Prices including Purchase Tax:

Blue Gillette 1/3 for 5 • Stainless Gillette 1/3 for 5 • Thin Gillette 1/3 for 6



WHO'S
WEARING A
"TRUBENISED"
COLLAR?

Admired in the mess and blessed by his batman, is our friend on the right. His "Trubenised" collars stay stiff without starch, they launder easily, they get soiled less quickly and they outwear other collars—it's all in the way they're made.

"Trubenised"
The word "Trubenised" is a registered Trade Mark. It distinguishes articles made by leading manufacturers and processed according to the instructions and under the control of Trubenised Ltd.

TRUBENISED LIMITED 17-18 OLD BOND STREET · LONDON · W.1



PUNCH

or
The London Charivari



Vol. CCIII No. 5313

December 16 1942

Charivaria

A FRINTON ornithologist reports seeing a strange bird on his lawn—small, compact and with a metallic cry. Could it be tinned turkey?

"Playgoers can mar a play by talking during the performance," says a writer. So can the players.

Rome radio explains that it was not the DUCE's cough that was heard during his last broadcast. Apparently he was breaking it in for somebody else.

A Santa Claus in a London store has a real beard. Even so, sophisticated children demand to see his identity card.



Crime, a medical man declares, is a disease. And time is the healer.

An income-tax official has been rewarded for bravery. True to type, he kept calm and collected.

A Hollywood producer has stated that he refused to marry his fiancée when he found she paid her dressmaker four thousand dollars a year. And no doubt married the dressmaker instead.

"I sent my husband down into the cellar to investigate the possibility of Christmas cheer," says a correspondent, "and he found practically nothing." A poor beverage report.



"Since the war hiking has fallen off considerably," says an open-air enthusiast. That was only to be expected with the drastic reduction in bus services.

"Taylor broke the ice with a mention of the history of Turkish baths."—*Evening Standard*.

It sounds an effective method.

It is rumoured in Switzerland that HITLER may pay a flying visit to North Africa to encourage his troops. In Russia?

"Some people don't know what to do with their hands when they are in company," states a psychologist. Bridge-players have noticed this too.

Total War

"Germans who have stolen French racehorses to set up their own studs may find it impossible after the war to have them, or their progeny, entered in the 'British Thoroughbred Stud Book.'" *Scottish Paper*.

A man who, with his seven children, lived in a caravan, told a Warwickshire magistrate that he was a packer by trade. He must have been.



Negro troops with the American Army in this country are said to miss some of the food to which they are accustomed. We understand that an experiment is to be made of providing them with dehydrated water-melons.

Things are so bad in Italy just now that the wolf often finds an Italian on its doorstep.

Remembrance

"**W**E have grown old together, you and I,
 'Tis eight-and-twenty winters, wet or dry,
 I well remember
 How first you came into this room and sat
 Next to me. You were clothed in white on that
 Rain-dark December,

Even as now—exchanging view for view—
 Though I perhaps said rather more than you
 After my fashion;
 I sometimes thought your half-unseeing gaze
 Could stare through both of us, and find no praise
 No pride, no passion.

Ah, well! They fade, the glory and the dream,
 The thoughts that, while they held the sunlight's gleam
 These heads would harbour;
 And now that yours, like mine, is tipped with grey
 You'll have it done, sir, in the usual way?"
 Inquired the barber. EVOE.

o o

Fuel-Saving in the Office

I NEVER did like autumn and the way you put off starting fires and shiver, because if you do freeze in spring you know it's going to get warmer, but of course it's worse than ever this winter with fuel-saving. I know all through that October we weren't having fires till November Doris and I were always discussing whether to come to the office in slacks—you can say what you like but they are warmer in spite of kilts—because it would mean we could wear any old stockings underneath, and that's a consideration at three coupons a pair because I always go through my knees warming my hands at the fire. Besides, a girl's thought nothing of this war unless she's in uniform or trousers.

Doris had been saying she'd got moths in her siren-suit so what about wearing it out like Mr. Churchill, and that set us talking about the air-raids and all those sing-songs we used to have raising the roof down in the basement and those nights you never got undressed and, bombs or no bombs, it was lovely to wake up in the morning and find you were still alive without having to get dressed all in the cold.

Central heating's all very well to dry things on and put your wet shoes underneath, but there's nothing colder than a radiator you keep feeling to see if it's on and it isn't. Give me a coal fire you can see as soon as you put your nose in. I shan't ever forget that Monday they suddenly told us we could have fires after all. That's the kind of fire-watching I like! Quite made you feel the war was over for five minutes.

Heating is a problem though. The girls opposite have gas-fires, and one of them went down to her boss's house in the country for the week-end to catch up when the last convoy came in, and she was looking forward to the wood fires he'd told her about. But when she came back she said he always had to go out and chop more logs first, and

by the time he came in he was so hot he didn't think they needed a fire after all.

Then that foggy morning if I didn't find the office boy taking all the criss-crosses off the windows, so I said to him, "Now don't you go getting complacent, Willie. There's a long dreary road ahead yet, even if the tide has begun to turn." But he said it was only to get all the light we could and save electricity, so I said that was all right but remember what I'd told him.

Though I will say Willie is very good as a rule for an office-boy and a salvage steward as well, though a bit apt to overdo it at times. However, he was quiet for a bit after that till, knowing Doris and I take it in turns to wash first and then the water's run hot by the time I get up there, he suddenly asked need we heat the tea-pot. And then it was Doris's turn to tick him off. "Willie," she said, "where are you going to draw the line? Why not make the tea with cold water if it comes to that?"

"You do a bit more work," I added, "and then you'll get such a glow of virtue you won't need a fire at all. There's such a thing as too much of a good thing, and all this fuel-saving of yours leaves me pretty cold, I must say. It never does to dare a climate like ours, and if people like you aren't careful we shall end up with the mildest winter on record and serve you all right!"

However, Willie made up for it this week because they've had the road up near us and two afternoons he's gone out and made toast for tea at their brazier, and it's been a nice change from the broken biscuits we've been having to save points—after all, you can't eat the biscuits whole, can you?

I feel ever so sorry for Doris's girl-friend who's in the Civil Service, because everybody can throw brickbats at them and no answering back, so they have to show a good example and work in a fridge and she's got chilblains before Doris this year. And then at home in her digs the poor girl only has one point, so she has to choose between having her electric fire on and the wireless, and she says the only time she can be really warm without feeling she's missing something is during the News in Norwegian.

Reminds me of us on the morning of a Saturday afternoon off and wondering whether to light the fire or have hot tea, and then there's the washing-up water too—unless you leave it till Monday, which I never like to, in case. And at night you can't decide whether to make the fire up and work late, or let the fire out and go home yourself and come in early in the morning. It doesn't matter so much now of course, now we have the black-out at both ends, but what a time we used to have groping round the office the last few minutes, so as not to have to put it all up to take down again the next morning.

It's to be hoped the old telephone books are going to last out on Mr. Head's windowsill to hold that chink down. I don't want to have to do his room all over again like ours. We thought we'd never get it right. Each time we could see a light showing somewhere. And then we'd just got it to our liking as we thought, and went out to have a look at it, seeing it had stopped raining, and when we crossed over it was beautiful, not a thing to be seen, and I said to Doris, there, she thought I'd been a bit fussy, didn't she, but hadn't it been worth it, because now we could get on with things and no more wardens coming snooping round.

Only it all goes to show it's not a bit of good getting into good habits as long as there's a war on. If only I'd stopped to think before I went out to see if we could see any light showing, I shouldn't have turned the light off first.



WAITING THEIR HOUR

[On December 17th, 1939, the first contingent of the Canadian Army, now in Britain, landed on our shores.]



"I don't know what we should have done without you, Sir. Do you mind if I have your fare?"

News from the Suburbs

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We are back from the Faroes, not quite so well as before, but I will come to that later. I want first to tell you about the Viking and his wife.

To begin with, you must realize that the Faroes consist of lots of little islands, all rather volcanic but fairly well supplied with vegetation, except that there are no trees. At least nothing we would call a tree. There is one pathetic little wood of stunted stuff about ten feet high, but that is all.

Well, one day last week X and I were taken to visit one of the islands called Kirkjubor. It is considered a local beauty spot, as it has an eleventh-century church and an uncompleted fifteenth-century Roman Catholic cathedral. Also a log-built Viking's house (I mean the house is log-built).

That brings me to the tale of the Viking's wife. Long, long ago a Viking decided to settle on Kirkjubor. The

reference books showed that there were no trees on the Faroes, so he told his wife to load up the long-boat with timber. His wife pointed out that if they did that large quantities of household goods would be shut out. She went into elaborate detail on what she would have to leave behind, pointing out that they would be away quite a time and he would not like to see her in the same costume for the next ten years, would he? Not that she had a decent rag to her name, anyhow. And there were the children's toys and young Olaf's bicycle and her sewing-machine and the butter-dish Uncle Haakon had given them on their wedding-day. So the Viking said "If you don't like it you can stop off," which she did. So he built a beautiful house when he arrived, having no wife to criticize where the airing-cupboards should be or to say how did he expect her to cook on a fireplace that size; while the

wife got married off to another Viking who never went to sea but who stayed round the house all day, criticizing everything she did, and she was very sorry. But the Viking married a Faroese girl who had never seen a log-house before and thought it swell, and they lived happily ever after.

As a footnote to this romantic story I may add that there is also a family called Paterson on the island, who are a mixture of Spanish, Moorish and Irish bloods, and who run the one market-garden in the Faroes. I cannot embellish those facts. It would make the whole story sound slightly incredible.

Speaking of the Faroese reminds me that I haven't told you anything about them. Like the Icelanders, the Faroese have had to face some considerable readjustments since the war. One, which they like, is that they are no longer looked down upon by the Danes.

The Danes left in the islands are in no position now to look down on anyone. In fact they must often sit up late at night and brood on where they do stand. To be Governor of an island and hold the commission of a king whose country is occupied by the Germans, and to be on the best of terms with the personnel of a British force who are occupying your section of your king's dominions, requires tact in my view. But it is being done.

The Faroese themselves seem to be a very likeable people. They mostly fish, and have a habit of beating up the town after a good trip, but then our Rugger clubs were rather inclined that way after a much shorter battle with the elements than a fishing-trip in the North Atlantic. And the girls are pretty and sensible. I mean they don't let politics interfere with life.

Faroese hospitality is extremely good, especially the question of liquor. We were invited to a kind of formal dinner one evening. The food was excellent; the drink was startling. We began with cocktails, which seemed normal. We then had port with the soup, which the soup did not deserve. That was followed by white wine. I have never been insulting to Australians, and I shouldn't dream of saying that the wine was very like Australian white wine, but it was awfully difficult to tell where it could have come from. The Sudan, possibly, or maybe it was some pre-war Japanese Graves or Barsac from the well-known Japanese villages of Graves or Barsac (originally named Kimono or Tutti-frutti until the export trade demanded otherwise). The white wine was followed by quantities of claret, equivalent to the best Portuguese claret-type wine. Then more port. And finally neat whisky. The neat whisky was very final—so far as I was concerned.

That dinner concluded our visit, which was a good thing, for I could not have stood another. And we sailed for home in a trawler.

The trawler, in my view, is not an ideal craft for the Northern Atlantic. It seems very difficult to live on the outside of the craft, that is unless you have grown gills. It is just possible to remain dry below, but only at the expense of preventing the ingress or egress of all vestiges of air. I suppose over the years people get used to it. They must develop some extra lung area, I should think, whilst the sense of smell goes into abeyance. It is odd, but men take up that kind of life practically voluntarily. One of the officers had worked in the Board of Trade until a year ago, and, apart from

the fact that he had always wanted to live in South America, was very contented with his lot. After days of this kind of thing, we finally reached an important naval station in Scotland. It took us some time to convince them that we were still practically allies, although temporarily not in working order, but we finally succeeded. Then we had the railway journey back to London. Personally, when next I travel I am going to disguise myself as a depth-charge or a Churchill tank. It's the only way to travel these days.

And so we say good-bye to this northern outpost, this misty isle in the Arctic seas, this home of . . . (fade out with music). But I hope no one thinks I am an expert on the place—or they may send me back.

Your loving son HAROLD.

Soldiers Talk.

ALPIN and I had high civilian pretensions that the Army little notes, so sometimes we find ourselves fed-up. Then the despised and rejected put on their coats and sally into the street, wrapped in separate gloom. By and by Alpin will observe on the day, looking straight ahead, and I will answer—looking straight in front. Neither comment registers but it sets the key. Bill's browned-off, he decides. Alpin's cheesed, I conclude.

"Three years, isn't it?"

"Three."

"What?"

"I concurred."

"Thought so."

We pace on, looking ahead.

"And how long in the Army?"

"Two. Nineteen-forty."

"Nineteen-forty?"

We proceed, staring before us.

"Canteen?"

"Canteen."

"Y.M.?"

Onwards.

"Maybe get some chocolate."

Five minutes of silent progress.

"Huh?"

"What?"

"Did you say something?"

"Nothing."

Another five.

"Said maybe get chocolate."

"Yes?"

"Don't know. Only said maybe."

"Huh."

"What?"

"I acquiesced."

We arrive and take a cup of tea, a jam-tart and a chair in a coma. Alpin

faces the counter and stares through the prettiest helper. Ten minutes of this embarrasses the girl. She thinks he sees her. I know better.

"Cigarette?"

"Thanks."

I take one.

"Not many here for week-end."

"This is Wednesday."

"Oh."

Silence.

"Not many here for Wednesday."

"I expect it's mid-week," observes Alpin.

Alpin, I may say, is a University man with high honours.

"Light?" he raises an interrogative match.

"Don't waste a match. Take it off this."

"It isn't lit."

"So it isn't. Anyway, I'm a non-smoker, dash it."

"So I thought."

"Some ways we're lucky to be here."

"Lucky?"

"In a town. Not like the country."

"No," he agrees, "more built-up, isn't it?"

"More facilities."

"Yes," says Alpin in a death-bed voice, "I am very happy here."

It takes just five seconds for that to register, then suddenly the inescapable comedy of it goes home and we laugh. That starts us from our trance and then Alpin will be using a poster as text for appraising Picasso. Before he has reached the Master's Blue Period he is alert, eager, glowing, persuasive, and I am feeling like the Princess roused from a century's sleep.

As we leave, "Chocolate!" cries Alpin.

"Don't tell me he had a Chocolate Period."

"No! Chocolate. We forgot to ask."

"Oh, you mean *chocolate*. We did, didn't we?"

"No."

"I mean we forgot."

"Or didn't we?"

"I forget."

High-lights of the War

"Not since the collapse of France have we had such heartening news as that of the past fortnight."

From a Parish Magazine.

"Air Ministry security experts have been through the material given in the book with a fine-tooth blue pencil and in its final form they have no quarrel to pick."

Scottish Paper.

But can anybody read it now?

The Collected Essays of J. Pope Clugston

ESSAYS

MOST essays are too long. "An essay is a short literary composition, usually in prose, on any subject." Right. Take an essay and test it. Literary? More or less. Composition? Absolutely. Prose? Seems that way. On any subject? Apparently. Short? No. Not short. Well, then, there you are. Put your finger on the trouble right away, what? And mind you, the dictionary doesn't say "usually short." It just says *short*. Well, either a thing is short or it is not, dammit. Even the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* doesn't claim to be short. Just shorter. Shorter than many an essay, perhaps.

DUST

Dust is a lot of small bits of the earth's surface lying about on the furniture's surface or on the floor and visible to the naked eye of the housewife. Never tell a housewife that the blueness of the sky or the pinkness of the sunset is caused by dust. This is true, but truth is the poorest excuse for telling a housewife anything. In fact it is often a good excuse for not telling her. If she does not believe you, you damage your credit. If she does believe you, she will never again be able to enjoy a blue sky or a pink sunset. She will want to get up there and dust it.

GOOD DEEDS

Chaps who go about doing good cheerfully are supposed to be better than chaps who do good grudgingly. But the willing ones are enjoying themselves, so that doesn't count. Let them think up something they don't like and do that for a while. And even then, some people actually enjoy doing things they don't like, if you know what I mean. And for that matter, even if you don't know what I mean.

THE AARD-VARK

The aard-vark is an animal who occurs on page 1 of any dictionary. He is the lexicographer's first love. He is a South African quadruped between the armadillo and the anteater. Whether the ant-eater is on his left and the armadillo on his right or vice versa is not made clear, but it is certain that he is in the middle. It is not very often that you get an animal always coming on page 1 like that. Perhaps it is not very often that you get a person reading page 1 of every dictionary either. Personally I have

always been very fond of the aard-vark and his friend the aard-wolf, who follows him about like a stooge. The modern tendency is to read page 345 of any work first and then complain that the book does not start with a bang. I am old-fashioned and love to start with the name of the hero's grandfather or two horsemen riding over the hill just as the sun falls with a muffled thud into a cloud, and I feel the same about dictionaries as I do about any other book. I don't see how you could start better than to have an aard-vark cropping up right away, closely followed by an aard-wolf.

FORESIGHT SAGA

One of the most important things when you do a wise act by mistake is to make certain everyone knows right away that you did it on purpose.

MORE ABOUT GOOD DEEDS

Helping your neighbours may cost you very little and yet they appreciate it very much. One of the easiest things you can do is to be philosophical about their troubles for them.

TATTOOING

Life is short and art is long, according to the Roman, but in the case of tattooing life and art end up in a dead heat. Exactly the same length. *Ars longa, vita ditto*. In fact life probably seems very long indeed to the chap who finds he has got all the wrong stuff tattooed on him.

PLODDERS

Nobody ever denies that the plodder is a Wise Guy. He knows exactly what he is going to do and then he goes and does it. Unfortunately, we know what he will do too, and that is what makes him seem dull.

JOKES

So far as I know, there has never been a joke about a censor, a black-out, an onion, some sugar, a commando, and a cake of soap, all combined in one merry little juxtaposition. So there is still something for science to work on, you see. I mean, the possibilities are practically endless.

A POINT OF LAW

It is against the law to destroy paper, of course. But I know a good many secret agents who have to swallow their private papers almost daily, and some of them are worried for fear they are breaking the law. It seems to me

they are not *destroying* paper, in the strictest sense. It is true they are converting it into food. But destruction? I think not.

ESCAPISM

Once upon a time two chaps were breaking out of a concentration-camp. One said to the other "Look here, you don't think we are just a couple of escapists, do you?" This worried them rather. Of course this is more of an anecdote than an essay, isn't it?

The Convalescent

CALLING to ask for my young friend Podgy McSumph, I found him seated in front of the kitchen fire, wrapped in a shawl and looking somewhat deflated. His medical attendant was feeling his pulse.

"How is the invalid to-day?" I asked.

"The Commander - in - Chief," reported Dr. Pills, "is getting along splendidly."

"He'll no' let me get beef for ma dinner," complained Podgy peevishly, "an' I'm hungry."

"Hungry and crabbit," said Dr. Pills. "Excellent symptoms."

"I've got two bottles," Podgy informed me, "an' Willie Pilkie had just one bottle when he was no' weel."

"A severe two-bottle case," said Dr. Pills.

"An' the bottles' names is hocus an' pocus."

"Sweet hocus pocus," hummed the sprightly old doctor. "Grand old medicaments," he remarked, winking at me and getting busy with his stethoscope.

"He's listening for the Germins noo," explained Podgy.

"Germans?" I queried.

"It's nasty wee things that gets doon yer throat an' makes ye no' weel. An' their names is the same as the big Germins."

"Podgy opened his mouth," said Dr. Pills, "and in they jumped—Hitler, Goering, and Goebbels—plop, plop, plop."

"An' Hitler was the worst," said Podgy, "because it was him that made me sneeze."

"But we've got the bad lads taped now," said Dr. Pills, replacing his stethoscope.

"Are they all deid?"

"Flat as pancakes," said Dr. Pills.

"An' can I get ma richt dinner noo," eagerly, "wi' beef?"

"Two more days," said Dr. Pills cheerfully, "and then comes beef, lashings of beef."

"But," fretfully, "I want beef noo from Wullie Flesh's shop, because I'm hungry."

"But——"

"An' every day I'm just always gettin' broth."

"But we must keep an eye on Hitler. Terrible chap. Give him the smallest taste of beef and he might start roaring again."

"But ye said the last time Hitler was drowned wi' broth."

"Quite so," said Dr. Pills, looking severely professional; "and now we need more broth to keep him down. Takes a lot of broth to keep a bad lad like Hitler down, Podgy."

"But," said Podgy, nodding his head threateningly, "whit if I was to die wi' gettin' too much broth an' nae beef?"

"Nobody ever died with too much broth," declared Dr. Pills. "But," rubbing his chin and looking thoughtfully at the ceiling, "I once heard of a boy who opened his mouth so wide shouting for beef that he couldn't get it shut again."

"Whit was his name?" demanded Podgy sternly.

"John Greedy," responded Dr. Pills with astonishing promptitude.

"Maybe he was wild wi' gettin' that much broth."

"Well, well, I must get away now," said Dr. Pills, taking up his bag, "to see if I can collect some babies."

"Ye said the last time ye would maybe show me a black baby if I would take ma broth."

"And that reminds me," said Dr. Pills, trotting off, "I think I know where I can get a good one if I'm there early."

"I'll have to be moving too, Podgy," I said. "It's just about my dinner-time."

"Whit'll ye be gettin'?" wistfully.

"Oh, not very much," I said.

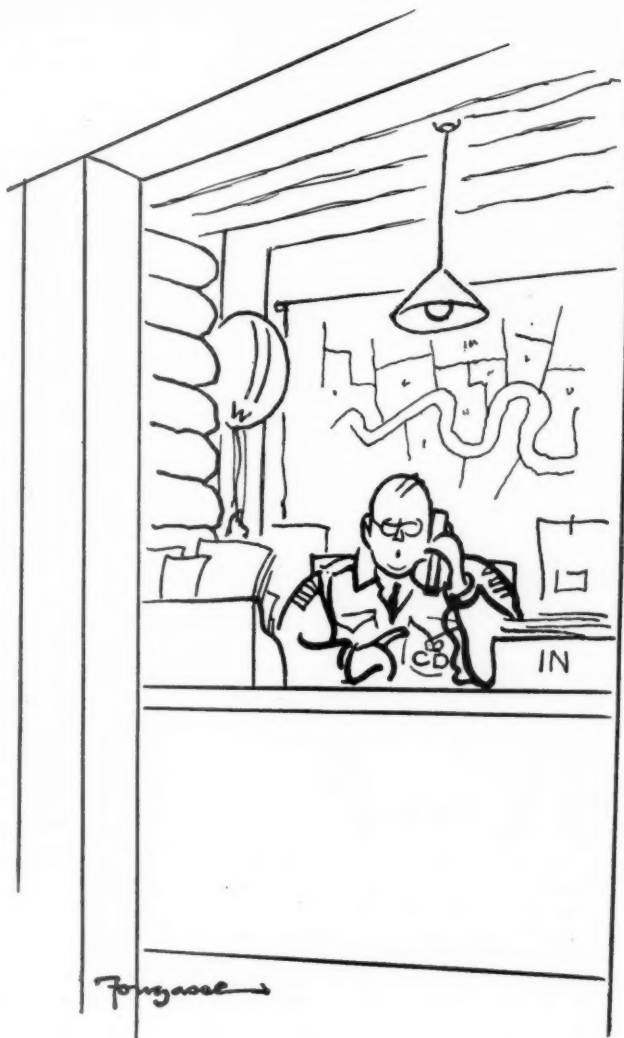
"Perhaps a little——"

At that moment Podgy's mother appeared with a towel over her arm and carrying a tray.

"Here's the butler," she announced, "wi' the gentleman's dinner."

"It's that dashed broth again," turning his face away from the hateful sight of the steaming bowl.

"Broth again," says he, "exclaimed his mother, 'an' this the very stuff for turnin' him into a grand big sodger."



"Furthermore, it is essential that all personnel should be impressed with the immediate probability of large-scale air-raids—and this is especially necessary when there is no immediate probability of large-scale air-raids."

"I'm no' goin' to be a sodger any more," growled Podgy.

"No' goin' to be a sodger?"

"An' I'm no' goin' to be a injin driver, an' I'm no' goin' to be a pirate neither."

"I declare," sighed Mrs. McSump, "the world's comin' to an end."

"Because it's a butcher that I'm goin' to be noo, wi' a shop like Wullie Flesh."

"A butcher?" gasped his mother. "Sellin' beef to a lot o' auld wives?"

"But I'm no' goin' to sell ma beef to naebody," retorted Podgy. "Because I'm goin' to eat it all maself." D.

o o

"Given to good home, half Spaniel dog, young."—Advt. in Local Paper.
Which half?



"Now your dog's grown up, do you think he could manage to deliver your next-door neighbour's paper as well as yours?"

H. J. Talking

ONE day I was boiling water in a test-tube and trying to make an accurate count of the bubbles, this being an experiment to determine the influence of alcohol on the numerical sense and I having taken a hundred ccs. of crème de menthe by the mouth to further it, when I noticed that our cat was trying to curl itself inside the turn-ups of my trousers, and repeated failure was merely causing it to squint. My observation of this led me into several deepish thoughts on perseverance, and how it has a bad effect on those who are gripped by it. Anyone who has done much persevering is apt to look down on others, and in my opinion schools which specialize in developing the ability to live in a community should discourage it as far as possible.

When I was at school our headmaster went to an educational conference in the holidays, and came back filled with enthusiasm for modern methods. In English, for example, he removed Shakespeare and Scott from the syllabus and substituted literature of a light and entertaining character. The first term our set-book was the latest volume of *Punch*, but our master, a scholar of the old school, changed his teaching methods as little as possible, and his favourite exercise was to make us copy out an article and underline the jokes neatly. We also had to learn by heart the names and dates of the editors from the beginning. For the end-of-term examination we had ten extracts from *Charivaria* and had to assign them to the issue in which they appeared, pointing out anything unusual in the way of grammar that we happened to notice.

I have frequently referred to Mrs. Oscar's boy and the ingenious and disturbing things that he has done, but I have so far made no reference to Mrs. Oscar, and such I now intend to make. She is a large jolly woman who does not believe in gramophones. She maintains that it is impossible and nothing will shake her. When pressed for her own explanation she mutters "Ventriloquism" and looks disapproving. To begin with, her incredulity was a social asset and she would be asked to parties so that hosts could convince friends who did not believe in her, but when the novelty wore off she was soon dropped as she had a way of tickling the necks of others present while a record was on to try to make the suggested ventriloquist miss his stroke.

Mrs. Oscar is one of the few people who can reduce my wife to silence, and this she does by taking every opportunity to cheer her up. She grips her tightly in two enormous hands, rocks her sharply to and fro and bellows with what she imagines to be infectious laughter, making the while such remarks as "Yoicks, my girl, the worms haven't got you yet." One thing which makes Mrs. Oscar particularly boisterous is an election, and she is always after my wife to go round with her hunting for candidates; when she finds them canvassing personally she produces a baby doll, well muffled in a shawl, and gets her victim to kiss it while my wife takes a portrait of the simple and affecting scene and afterwards a close-up of the doll's face, this being of a low and alluring character, and the pictures being then sold to the opposition Press.

For a time I was myself connected with the Press as columnist on a local paper, and this I did as payment for an advertisement I put in to try to sell a very large carpet which was left me by an uncle who had owned a cinema, and in fact this carpet had covered the whole of the ground floor, but owing to its size and the holes where the seats had been it was difficult to dispose of. I did not know much about the neighbourhood, and as general news was dealt with by the manager of any shop which wished to hold a sale and the humour section was done by an estate agent whose advertisements were very large so that he had to write several columns to pay for them, I had some difficulty in filling my space and a good deal of it was apt to be moral exhortation and facts. I will now give you a few examples from this feature which was traditionally headed "Coffin Nails," it having been started by a local undertaker:—

*** A pig in Kansas has been taught by its owner to smoke cigars, but not until the band has been removed.

*** Let us be kind to others and hope that they will be even kinder to us.

*** Lord John Russell's first Cabinet weighed more than a motor car but less than a railway train.

*** Your reputation is a delicate plant and should be fostered carefully. Get your friends to speak well of you behind your back; if necessary you can do the same for them.

*** A famous Bishop began life as a tea-taster. Several witty jokes were made about this, some in Latin.

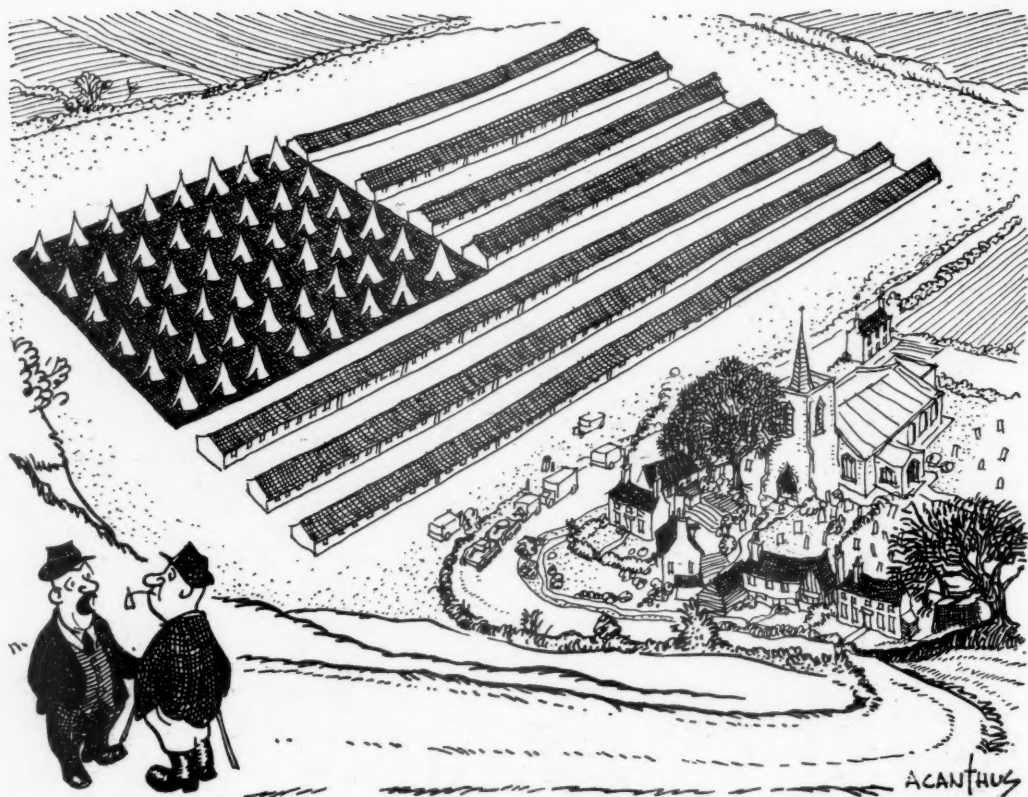
*** Smile when you walk along the street, but only if you have that kind of face.

*** Much interesting knowledge can be gained by the study of trigonometry—for example, the height of the Nelson Column. It is also useful in other ways.

*** A happy disposition is the next best thing to private means.



"I wish you hadn't asked the name of the village, old boy."



"They won't let on who the camp is for."

H.M.S. *Caroline*

"C" Class Cruiser. Built 1915. Base-ship, Belfast.

I AM alone in the ward-room,
But my thoughts are not alone,
They are one with the thoughts of the officers and
men—

"All ranks and ratings" in the naval phrase—
Who've known this ship, and gone.

H.M.S. *Caroline* !

This fine-bred slender ship that knows affront,
Tied up eternally against the wall,
And bearing on her decks the importunities
They've loaded on her in retirement:
Deck-houses, things without shape, odd offices,
"Accommodation"—that's their word—a Base-ship needs.

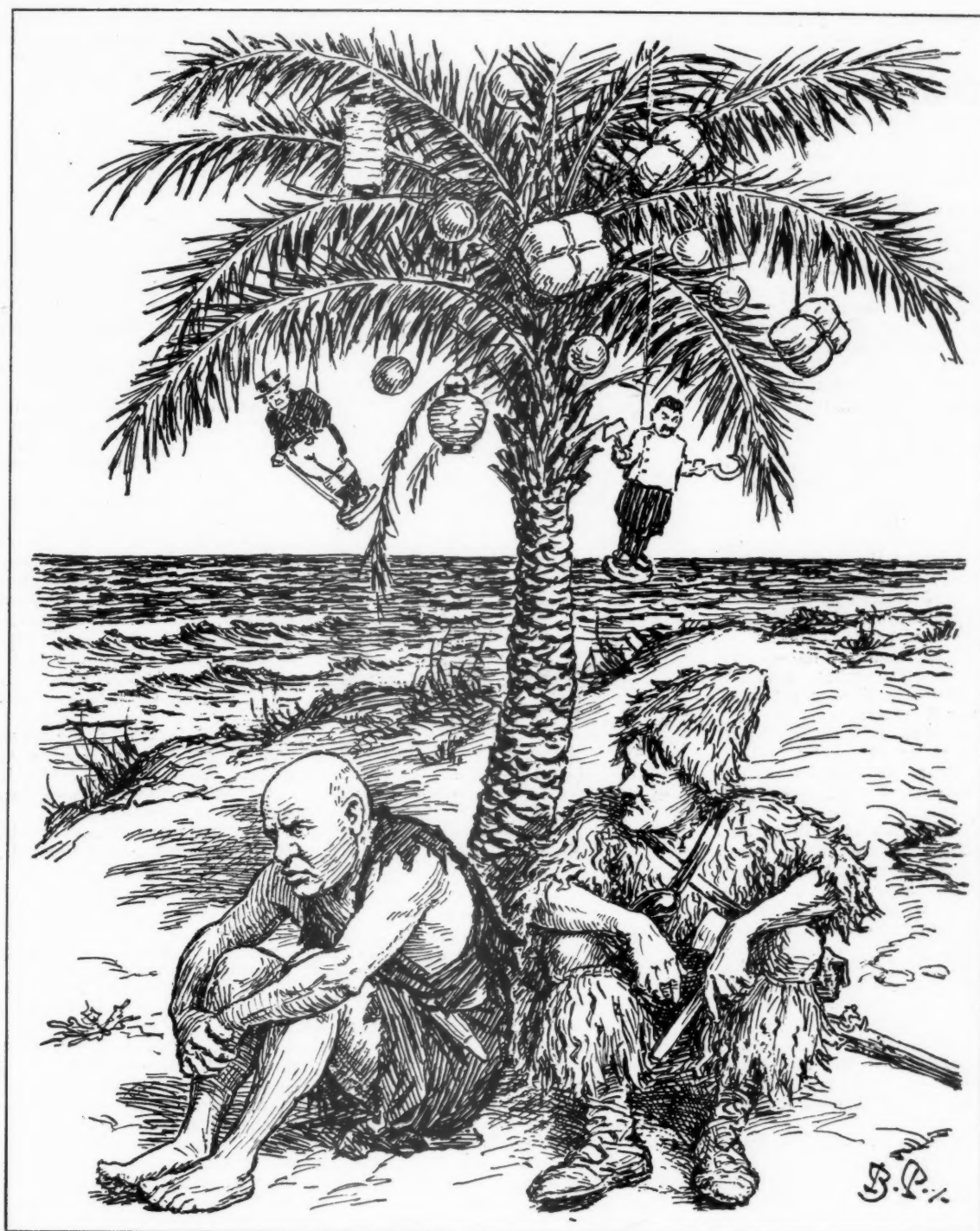
But *Caroline*, the lithe lady!
Remembering the way she leapt
Through the cold Jutland foam;
Thinking of the seven seas
The sheer of her bows has thrust gaily aside

In accurate pluming cascades;
The laughter and talk of her crews;
The glint of gold lace on her quarter-deck!

A brick incinerator's on that quarter-deck
Where once there was gold lace.
Poor *Caroline* !

But here in the ward-room, and alone,
I need not see these things.
I see this ship in the minds of the men,
The ranks and ratings of her companies,
Who trod the gangways and the decks,
Who touched and knew the bulkheads, the ship's sides,
The cabins and the scuttles, paced the bridge,
Handled the davits, cables, winches, guns.

These men and their remembering are you,
Nor alter, *Caroline*.



THE FESTIVE SEASON

"Cheer up, Man Freitag; this is an old German custom of ours."

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, December 8th.—House of Commons: Man-Power Debate.

Wednesday, December 9th.—House of Commons: More Man-Power.

Thursday, December 10th.—House of Commons: Secret Again.

Tuesday, December 8th.—The Circumlocution Office, which flourished in the time of Charles Dickens, reopened its doors with a blare of trumpets in the House of Commons to-day. Nobody seemed to be able to say "Yes" or "No" or even the "Don't Know" of the public opinion surveyors.

It was Lord BALDWIN who invented the disconcerting monosyllable as reply to a 250-word Parliamentary question. It worked well. To-day Members and Ministers alike seemed determined to go to the other extreme.

Take Mr. CHURCHILL himself. Someone asked him about a speech made a day or two before by Mr. ATTLEE, Deputy Prime Minister. Most people placed as he clearly was would have replied "Haven't read it!" and left it at that.

But that master of the spoken word, Mr. CHURCHILL, spurned such phrases and easy get-outs. This was his reply:

"I am afraid I am not bearing in my mind at the moment those passages in the Deputy Prime Minister's speech which refer to this controversy."

The rest, as the Victorian novelists would say, was silence. Except for the sibilant mutterings of the questioner.

But it was not perhaps surprising (if not precisely cause and effect) that Mr. Speaker thereupon announced the abandonment of the age-old right to a "second chance" for those Members who are not present to ask their questions at the first time of asking—so to speak. Mr. Speaker mentioned that Ministers (like heavy-weight boxers) could not afford the time to wait about for the "second round."

He assured Mr. GEOFFREY MANDER (who displayed both alarm and despondency, although he is *never* absent the first time) that this was purely a war-time restriction, and that, come peace, the inquisition would have its full powers restored.

Immediately, an acute shortage of man-power developed in the House. Sixty of the nation's elect stayed to

hear the debate on a Bill to make the best use of our eighteen-year-olds.

Mr. ERNEST BEVIN, Minister of Labour, explained that modern war was for youth to conduct, and added that as it was impossible to win with a mass-produced army, it was important to start training boys as soon as they became 18 years old. He announced (with the seeming pride of one who is glad to do as all other Ministers do)



"TO ARMS!"

"The sentinel on Whitehall Gate
Looked forth into the night . . ."
Macaulay.

MR. BEVIN

that there would be a secret session on man-power—later.

The Government did not want to take older men from civil life—but might have to as the war went on. The final show-down with the Nazis would mean casualties, and then it would be all-hands-to-the-guns. Ruthlessness, the Minister ruled, was "all right so long as it was fair."

Mr. HUGH MOLSON demanded that older men should not be called to the Forces, to the dislocation of local economy and the general upset of normality, without any corresponding advantages to the common weal.

Mrs. HARDIE disapproved of "slanging matches" between Mr. CHURCHILL and the leaders of the Axis, but Mr. MALCOLM MCCORQUODALE, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour, known as the Gentle Giant, declined to join in a slanging match with Mrs. HARDIE or any of the score of other M.P.s then present, and he cooed the Bill to its Second Reading. This objective was attained, in spite of a challenge by the I.L.P. (both of it), by some 265 votes to 5.

Wednesday, December 9th.—Mr. RUPERT DE LA BÈRE took over the management of the Circumlocution Office to-day. He offered this substitute for the "Fibber!" of our nursery days:

"Is the Honourable Member aware that the facts are otherwise?"

The following paragraph should be enclosed in a frame of gold, but the Precious Metal Control would object, so it must be taken as read—or gold.

Mr. WILLIAM MABANE, of the Food Ministry, corrected a misapprehension about the cost of subsidizing eggs. It was a mere £15,000,000, not £37,000,000. That was to pattern. But in what followed, Mr. MABANE showed himself different from all other Ministers and M.P.s. *He did not blame the Press.* Indeed he specifically acquitted the Gentlemen of the Quill.

Even the ranks of the Press Gallery could scarce forbear to cheer. But that participation in events being against the rules, they merely smiled gratefully.

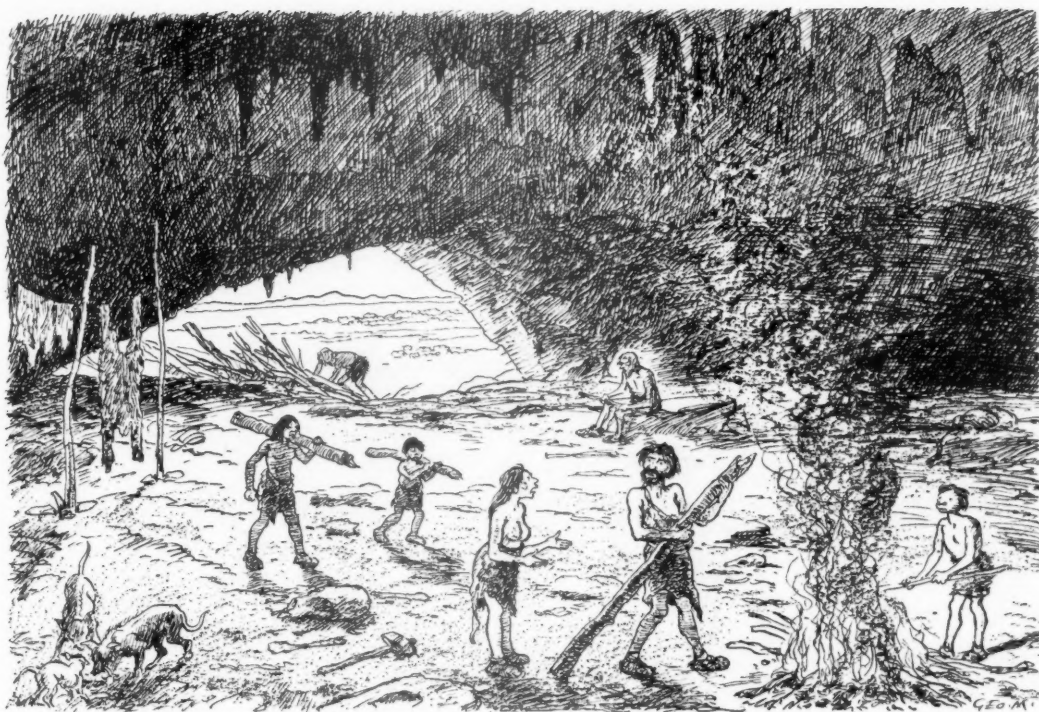
Mr. PHILIP NOEL-BAKER, of the War Transport Ministry, scored the laugh of the Session with this:

"More third-class than first-class passengers ask porters to help them with their luggage." (Loud cheers and laughter.) "And a large proportion of these are Members of the Forces." (*Uproarious, thigh-smiting laughter and breathless cheers.*)

In which, as the police-court reporters say, the accused joined.

Mr. Attorney-General announced that, after grave thought, the legal luminaries had come to the conclusion that, in view of modern fashion trends, it was not necessary for women to wear hats in our courts of law. This gained a general cheer, with Sir ARCHIBALD SOUTHBYS dissenting. He wanted men to have the right to wear their hats, this being the logic of the thing—he said.

Major MARKHAM complained of the "innumerable number" of some



"If we lived in a smaller cave, I tell you, we shouldn't need such an enormous fire."

regulations, but Members had not recovered their strength enough to laugh.

There followed a "second house" debate on man-power and what are known as cognate subjects.

Thursday, December 10th. — Mr. HERBERT MORRISON was asked about the plans to amalgamate police forces, and said firmly that he intended to do it in Kent, Sussex and other places where it seemed desirable. The House can take it—and did. Secretly, it rather likes Mr. MORRISON's forthright way of saying "Move along there, please."

It was, in all but name, a joint sitting of the two Houses, for so many Peers crowded into the Galleries that the housing problem became acute. Millionaire Press Lords sat on the laps of mere Field-Marsals, and Law Lords did not sit at all.

Convinced that, so far as the Great British Public are concerned, "Secrecy is Good For You," the Grand Inquest went into camera once more, to hear about the position of Admiral DARLAN in North Africa.

There are rumours—at present unconfirmed—that the House intends to sit in public again early in 1943.

Souvenir d'Enfance

THE other day while rummaging through my next consignment of salvage I came across a neat white card bearing the words "Mason's Xmas Club—Pay What You Like: Have What You Like." In the space reserved for book-keeping I made out a faded 2d. (twopence), and my mind fled back over the intervening years to the day when that entry was made.

It was Saturday night. All week the notice in Mason's window had been before my eyes—

JOIN OUR XMAS CLUB.
PAY WHAT YOU LIKE: HAVE WHAT YOU LIKE.

I believed in the instinctive goodness of mankind. The world was peopled by elderly men called uncles who patted you on the head and gave you pennies and butterscotch, by aunts who conjured delectable sweetmeats from the mysterious depths of their handbags, and by parents, inconsistent perhaps, but certainly endowed with all the

powers of the alchemist. I don't think I believed in fairies, but I had seen my father obtain goods from shops merely by writing his name on a piece of paper. Shops were really the most wonderful institutions. "Pay what you like—Have what you like"—I believed it quite literally. After all, if mother could get all she asked for by sending the maid with a list and no money, surely small boys could get what they wanted for a penny or two. The world was a good place to be in. I was glad I had been born. The future opened out before me as a communist paradise.

I stood for quite a while outside Mason's shop before I ventured in. I said that I wanted the model railway set and that I was prepared to pay twopence and would Mr. Mason wrap it up as it was raining. . . .

I believe that night was the bitterest of my life. The patient explanation and the progressive disillusionment are etched deeply in my memory.



"I understand you've been riveting in your name and address."

How It's Done.

"... P.S.—Have you seen Penelope's girl lately? Such a mistake to let her do her hair in that exaggerated style, ruining her whole appearance."

"... Aunt Evelyn writes that Penelope's girl is doing her *hair* so badly. Some of these modern fashions are so unbecoming. Perhaps you could say something to Penelope, and *she* could say something to the girl, as one so dreads giving even a hint to the young."

"... I quite agree about Penelope's girl's hair. Such a pity, but my dear, what *can* one do? I really think Penelope ought to speak to her."

"... You remember Penelope's girl—quite a pretty child? She's got her hair done so unbecomingly. The aunts are terribly worried about it, and grannie actually said something to Penelope, but Penelope simply doesn't know what to do as she says the younger generation wouldn't *dream* of paying any attention and would sooner go about like Hottentots."

"... Believe it or not, William *himself* has noticed the way Penelope's girl has taken to doing her hair and simply spoke straight out—you know what William is—and it hasn't made the *slightest* difference. She doesn't seem to realize how frightfully careful she ought to be with a forehead like that."

"... Penelope seems quite well, but so worried about the way her girl will insist on doing her hair. And the aunts and grannie are quite upset about it, and even poor Miss Mural—you remember poor Miss Mural, in the old days, with her nose?—well, Miss Mural actually said that she didn't care for it *at all*, and you can guess how dreadful it must be before poor Miss Mural would say such a thing."

"... With much love, dear Aunt Evelyn, and I do *hope* you'll really say something because it's a shame to let the girl go on ruining her looks simply by this *impossible* coiffure, but I do so know how you feel about it. ..."

"I do think Aunt Evelyn is really *splendid*. She was nearly a week at Bovey Tracy, and she simply told the girl straight out that this new way of doing her hair is atrocious and too utterly unbecoming for words. Of course, poor Penelope was *thankful*, not having dared to say a word herself. Not that they think it's going to make the slightest difference, but still she ought to *know*. Don't you agree?"

"... Aunt Evelyn says she had the most wonderful time with you, and so delighted with everyone and everything, only *not* caring for the way your girl is doing her hair, which seems such a pity as she really could look so charming, and really permanent waves are so simple nowadays."

"... P.S.—William and I absolutely agree with you about permanent waves and would *willingly* pay for one, but she won't hear of it, poor darling, and one daren't say too much."

"... I'm sure you'll be amused, in a way, to hear that Grannie has had

a letter from old Lady Warlock, who really is *wonderful* at ninety-five, and was so interested to meet Penelope, whom she knew in the cradle, and her girl, and writes too charmingly about them both, but asks *why* Penelope's girl doesn't do her hair more becomingly? I have *begged* Penelope to pass this on, and she says she will, but William and Aunt Evelyn and Uncle Charles, and even *young* Charles, all say that it won't have any effect whatsoever."

"... months since I last wrote, darling. I met Penelope's girl in Belfridges last week and thought her so attractive, but *why* does she do her hair like that?"

"... The St. Ives relations have been over and say they don't *at all* like the way Penelope's girl is doing her hair."

"... Absolutely not the slightest good saying anything, as William told Aunt Evelyn last week."

"... It just is that I think it's a pity, when she *could* look so sweet. But of course if neither you nor William nor the aunts nor the St. Ives lot can do anything, I suppose it's no use going on at her."

"... P.S.—By the way, darling, Penelope's girl has had her hair cut and curled and *quite* simply parted in the middle, and looks enchanting. I believe one of her young Air Force friends just told her that the other way was too utterly 1941. Anyway, she changed it next day." E. M. D.

What Do You Make It?

ARULING in the American courts that bridge is a game of chance is not surprising. In my experience it has always been pure luck whether any two players even arrive at the same score.

Take an average bridge four.

The first player will brook no argument. At the end of the rubber he draws a firm line on his score sheet and strikes his balance, at the same time nudging the player whose turn it is to cut, and telling him to get on with it. If anyone queries his total he does not even reply, but points to the player whose turn it is to deal, and raps on the table impatiently.

The second keeps the score (after a reasonable opening period) by crossing out figures he has already written down, and not by adding anything

else. Nobody else therefore can tell what the position is at any given time; neither can the keeper, except by holding the sheet up to the light to find out what he has crossed out.

The third copies from everybody else's sheet in turn, but forgets to adjust differences due to the WE and THEY columns being reversed. He is in fact like a man who alters his watch to agree with every clock he sees, yet cannot understand why he has missed his train.

The fourth disdains to score at all. He simply "does not keep it."

The result is something like this:—

A (throwing down the last card in his hand with a sigh). I don't know why it is, I never seem to hold a sausage.

B. That is no reason why you should not know the difference between a spade and a king.

C. I hope that when you get to heaven, A, you will find three angels to make up a four with you.

A. I shall certainly hope to cut with Gabriel, if I do. At least he will know where the last trump is.

C. I don't know why you people play the game if it only irritates you.

A. It irritates *me* because B always says it is a game of skill if he wins and one of chance if he loses.

B (adding up). Another 1,700.

"ITALY," said Metternich, "is a geographical expression."

That was before the day of Garibaldi, maker of modern Italy, lover of Freedom, friend of Britain. Now the wheel has come full circle, and the Italy of Mussolini, enemy of Freedom, foe of Britain, lies in the dust. But what of the day when the strutting braggart struck at beaten France? Do you remember General Wavell's men and their feats of arms? Admiral Cunningham's at Matapan? And the Fleet Air Arm at Taranto?

MUSSOLINI WON'T FORGET!

Many of the heroes of these battles did not return; many are in hospital; the rest are eagerly awaiting to engage and defeat a still more evil foe.

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN

to send a contribution to Mr. PUNCH'S COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4? Send now to show your appreciation and gratitude to our magnificent fighting men.

D. How on earth do you arrive at that?

(B passes across his score-sheet.)

D. Oh, I can never understand that way of keeping the score. I believe that is why you use it. No wonder you get it wrong.

B (who has shuffled and has already passed the cards to be cut). It is not wrong.

D (to A). What do you make it?

A (sitting back, hands in pockets, and looking into space). I nevah keep the score.

C. Well! Whatever game can you expect to win like that?

B. Golf.

D. I make it 1600, but I don't know whether this is a two or an eight.

A. You wrote it.

C (looking). It is a six.

D. Ah, that explains the difference.

A. Not knowing whether a six is an eight or a two does not explain being one hundred out. It simply complicates it.

D. Oh, well then, I must have added it up wrong.

C. From the way you write down figures nobody else can read you must think you are a doctor playing with three chemists. Here, let *me* see. Why, you have scratched half of it out!!!

D. Yes, you can show us yours now.

C. I didn't put it *all* down. I just kept the essentials.

B. Exactly; I *did* put it all down, and I say it is 1700.

A (looking round the table suspiciously and sliding his small change into the middle). Well, fight it out amongst yourselves. I'm going to bed.

C (in an undertone). I bet it isn't 1700.

D. As a matter of fact I make it 1706 now! (*Pandemonium!*)

When you come to think of it, no game could be anything but chance in these conditions. What would happen at cricket if each man carried an old envelope in his pocket, jotted down his rough impressions of the score with a stubby pencil at the fall of a wicket, or copied it from someone else's at the end of an over?

At bridge, as at any other game, the player should be free to concentrate on his play. The score should be kept for him by a marker with a blackboard, as at darts, and the marker would tell each player what he needed to win.

It would not be a bad idea if the same principle applied to battle.

The rules of war have long since ceased to matter.

The score is still vital.

Yet at no time have the participants any idea what it is.

No wonder our strategy is awful.



"This year I'm giving everyone Italian helmets."

Nightmare

UNCLE said he had been home on leave for two days when he had a curious nightmare which started with him sitting in the study with his deerstalker on his head and saying to Mabel: "March her in!"

Whereupon Aunt Augusta was marched in by Mabel, who said: "Left, right, left, right! Pick your feet up! Left turn! Left, right, left, right! Halt! Keep your head still!"

Uncle then leant over the study desk and regarded Aunt Augusta every now and then with a gimlet eye as he read the charge.

The charge against Aunt Augusta was that she failed to exercise proper control of the children, allowing them to race and shout about the house

to the prejudice of good order and discipline. Aunt Augusta pleaded guilty and was sentenced to seven days' C.B. after being given a good ticking-off and a sermon on the seriousness of her offence. Mabel then marched out Aunt Augusta and was herself marched in by the gardener. The charge against Mabel was that she had underdone the meat at dinner. There was a second charge of leaving the scullery light on when the room was not in use. For some reason Uncle remanded Mabel for the Divisional Commander, after which the children were marched in one by one and sentenced to various terms of C.B. and deductions of pocket-money under Royal Warrant.

The height of the proceedings was

reached when Toffee, the puppy, was marched in on a charge of begging for food during lunch, having already consumed his own lunch in the kitchen. Uncle gave the animal twenty-eight days' detention, and an awful silence fell on the house, to be split by a yell from upstairs, and Uncle knew he had forgotten his interview with Grandmother Augusta. He broke into a cold sweat and tried vainly to remember what he had done wrong this time and where he had put his belt and hat. Visions of court-martial were floating before his eyes when somebody said: "Here's your tea, darling. We're giving you breakfast in bed."

Little Talks

I SEE that Churchill has gone up to more than ninety per cent. in popular approval?

Oh, yes?

Some months ago he was down to sixty or seventy per cent.

Oh, yes?

Well, aren't you impressed?

Are you referring to that absurd piece of pomposity the Something-or-Other Poll, in one of the dailies?

Yes. I think it's interesting. Last time they had a graph.

I saw it. And I thought the graph just about put the lid on the lot. I thought the graph was just about high-tide in the Pompous Ocean. I thought the graph—

But, my dear fellow, a scientific register—

"Scientific?" What did the graph show?

Well, it showed—I forget the exact figures now, of course—but it showed that about the time of Crete Churchill's stock went down to so-and-so, and then it went up when he went to Russia, and then it was down again about the Second Front and all that; and now—

Listen. Was the Prime Minister different in any way at these various times? Do you think his courage, capacity, activity, ability, were popping up and down like a fever-patient's temperature?

Well, no. I suppose you may take it that he was pretty well the same all the time.

Exactly. So that all your ludicrous graph shows is that the people to whom these questions are put are people of flabby faith—people who lose confidence in their leaders the moment anything goes wrong, or even seems to go wrong—people who shoot up like balloons when there's a bit of good

news—and flop with a loud pop again as soon as there's a set-back!

Well, after all, that's a very human failing.

Maybe. But I see no particular reason to measure it with "scientific graphs" and publish the results abroad with snorts of satisfaction.

Well, I dunno. I should have thought Churchill would be rather glad to see a graph like that, showing that he's away up top.

On the contrary, I'm quite sure it horrifies him to see such evidence of spinelessness exhibited in Fleet Street. Because, after all, it shows that to-morrow, if we lose a battleship, he may go down with a thump. And, by the way, who are these people?

Well, aren't they a sort of British branch of the American Gallup Poll?

No, I mean the people these questions are put to—the pollees, so to speak?

It's always stated that they're a "scientific cross-section of public opinion."

Well, who are they? And how many? We're not even told that. Did you ever meet a man who'd been asked to answer one of these questions?

Can't say I have.

Nor have I. And I move about a bit. It's extraordinary. For all we know, the editor strolls round the office and asks the first five fellows he meets. I don't suppose for a moment that's true, but—

Well, if he did, I suppose you get every shade of opinion in a big office.

It depends on the office. Some of the lads who are so busy prodding on the war-effort now wanted to make peace after the fall of France.

Did they?

They did. And if I knew that one of them was counted in the Churchill Approval Poll I should not be particularly impressed. Nor would he.

They say these Polls have given very accurate forecasts in America — on elections and so on.

To publish aids to those who wish to bet on the American elections in peace-time is one thing. To publish, with the label "scientific," periodical assessments of the Prime Minister's popularity in time of war is quite another. Because in war-time the people who answer the questions cannot at any given moment have all the information on which to found a judgment—

Oh, come, that's rather heavy. What about Darlan?

All right. Take Darlan. An excellent example.

Well, aren't you worried about Darlan?

Of course. Who isn't? But I don't consider myself sufficiently important—or informed—to go about shouting that I'm worried about Darlan. And if I read in the papers—as, for all I know, I may to-morrow—that because of Darlan the P.M.'s stock has gone down ten points in the Popularity Poll, I shall think even less of such Polls than I did.

But surely the instinct of the people is sound and ought to be recorded?

The instinct of the people was perfectly sound about a Second Front. They wanted one. But they didn't know—and couldn't be told—that North Africa was brewing. If they had known, their answers to the P.P. would have been quite different at certain times. And since they can't be told such things, it's imbecile to ask the questions. That's what I mean.

Darlan's different. Anyone can form a judgment about a thing like that.

Any ass can jump to conclusions, you mean. I should have thought that after the Second Front affair people like you might have piped down for a moment or two—

What d'you mean, people like me?

People who will jump to the conclusion that their own Government is a gang of crooks and half-wits, before they've heard the relevant—

Well, you're a proper Yes-man, aren't you, old boy?

In war-time, when I don't know the facts, I certainly think it right to give any Government the benefit of the doubt—until I do.

"Until you do"? But by that time the mischief's done!

My poor conceited loon, do you solemnly suppose that anything you

again. Not that you seem to mind that.

Look here, old boy, you've no right to say that. There's such a thing as Free Speech.

Then I have got a right to say it. But I'm not at all sure that you've a right to be so worried about Darlan.

Why on earth not?

You've always been keen on winning the war by "political warfare," haven't you?

Of course. Nobody but an ass would neglect the psychological front.

I want to beat the Germans fair and square in the field. Promise them nothing. But you want to promise them things—promise we won't be nasty—show them we're keen on reforms, and so on. I want to beat the Germans—you want to bring them over.

I want both. I want them to turn against Hitler, of course.

And when they do you'll co-operate with them?

Have to. I'm not so keen on all this blood and slaughter.

What!—co-operate with all those beasts who've been torturing, murdering, raping—

No, no, I mean the decent Germans, of course.

Of course. But suppose a nasty German turns against Hitler? Suppose several nasty Gauleiters turn against Hitler and rally their districts against him? What then?

Well—

You wouldn't let them?

I won't say that. But I should turn a Nasty out as soon as I could.

Even if he had the people behind him—all of whom had turned against Hitler?

Yes.

Is that quite in keeping with your old Atlantic Charter?

Oh, shut up! What's your policy, anyway?

Fortunately, I'm not a member of the Government—or a People's Pollee—so I don't have to have a policy. Like you, I worry. (I worry, for example, about the safety of our soldiers.) But, unlike you, I wait.

Well, anyhow . . . A. P. H.

o o

Not Wholly Matrimony

"Part-Time married women.—Bartholomew's Yard Entrance, Bath Road."

Advt. in Gloucestershire Echo."

o o

"If you want a carefree removal of your furniture . . ."—*Advt. in "The Scotsman."*

We don't.

NOTE

THE opinions of the two speakers in these dialogues are entirely their own. Mr. Punch does not necessarily agree either with the poor loon or with his persecutor.

or I say is going to alter the attitude—or action—of the Government about Darlan? Does it occur to you that the Government may be worried about Darlan already, without the assistance of a People's Poll?

I dare say they are.

Especially as they don't happen to be in charge at the place in question. Well, then, let's wait a bit this time, shall we, before we organize protest meetings in Trafalgar Square, and so forth. Otherwise we may look silly



"I always leave it tuned-in to Berlin—and waste the enemy's fuel."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Philip Howell

THIS book (*Philip Howell. A Memoir By His Wife.* ALLEN AND UNWIN, 15/-) deserves to be remembered not only as the record of a man whose gifts and character were altogether out of the common, but also for the perfect balance in its writer of deep feeling, sincerity and reserve. The youngest general in the British Army at the time of his appointment, HOWELL was killed on the Somme in the autumn of 1916, at the age of thirty-eight. Had he lived, he would, in the opinion of good judges, have become one of the great figures of the war. "Howell," wrote a friend who served with him, "was the first professional soldier I had ever met who instantly produced the effect of something more than talent. He had genius. That rare impersonal quality which proclaims a vocation was his." In his early twenties HAIG picked him out to serve on his staff, but his interests extended beyond the Army. At twenty-five he was *The Times* special correspondent in the Balkans, and in this capacity not only exposed Mr. BALFOUR's uncertain grasp of Balkan affairs, but also, when *The Times* had a difference with their correspondent at Sofia, sided with the correspondent, ceased to send back news, and when *The Times* demanded the reason of his silence telegraphed: "I am waiting for you to tell me what to say." His judgment was equal to his courage and independence. When the war broke out he foresaw that it would last for some years, and he feared that a crushing victory for the Allies would lead to an unwise peace. As a fighting soldier he was distinguished by his coolness, thoroughness, and care for the lives of those under him. "Extravagance of everything, including life," he wrote, "is characteristic of the British: most of our men would rather be shot than take the trouble not to be."

Self-contained and somewhat impervious to the lesser kinds of happiness, PHILIP HOWELL was profoundly happy in his marriage. This appears not from any direct statements by the writer, but from the tone of his letters to his wife, and from occasional sentences in which she recalls the past. Of their first home she writes: "Whenever I hear the cry of an owl it all comes back to me—the wood's smell and the moon rising over the hill"; and she describes the feeling which underlay their love and united them so closely as "one quite distinct from that of affection or love . . . a feeling akin to eternity—a sensing of immutable things."

H. K.

Youth Returns to China.

If the hero and heroine of *Destination Chungking* (CAPE, 12/6) come only spasmodically to life, it is perhaps because the legend of the China they serve is intended to outshine the legend of *Pao* and *Suyin*. Disguised as "HAN SUYIN," the authors of *The House of Exile* have here collaborated in the autobiography of a Chinese girl who studied midwifery in London during the thirties and met there the sweetheart of her childhood who had been sent to Sandhurst. *Pao* and *Suyin* return home engaged. In Hankow they marry and part—he to CHIANG KAI-SHEK's staff, she to a hospital. The rest of the book deals mainly with the young wife's bitter war experiences and a long rest from them with old-fashioned relatives in Szechwan. The bombing of Chungking is grimly described; and "the coolie army" and its devoted civilian backers come out staunchly enough. But it is the traditional life of "Big Family" and the young people's blend of ancestral wisdom and youthful initiative that ends by moving one most profoundly. It seems as though China, unlike most of her fellow-belligerents, has a life compounded of the best of the old and the best of the new to offer the men who have volunteered to die for her.

H. P. E.

"To Start You Talking"

"Democracy is not government by counting heads, but government by debate and explanation." So says Lord WEDGWOOD, forthright champion and declarer of the old Liberal creed, who once organized a strike of school-children, loves honest rebellion for its own sake, and has by no means lost faith in the British House of Commons, in the force of public opinion, in Protestantism, in the average good sense of an unreformed House of Lords, or even in human nature. In the eternal battle between freedom and authority he marches—one cannot imagine him ever standing—for the greatness of the individual spirit, and he lays about him with the broadest sweeping gestures of assertion or denial. In *Testament to Democracy* (HUTCHINSON, 8/6) he proclaims once again that people must be taught to think for themselves, not taught what to think, and that once they are using their own brains they must be trusted, regardless of race or colour, with their own responsible parts in the making of that more cheerful world that is commonly supposed to be available for us as soon as we deserve it. He deplores a tendency in all political groups to a tightening of party discipline, yet trusts our "ineradicable toleration and Nonconformity" to keep us from disastrous extremes, while for some of our toughest questions he is prepared with specific solutions. Land valuation will defeat unemployment, a more extensive settlement in Palestine will turn the Jewish problem to a world asset, and the Indian trouble can be handled successfully, not in one uneasy gulp but province by province. The whole book is superbly robust, a proper manual for a rising generation of free peoples. C. C. R.

Cure for Nostalgics

MISS RACHAEL FERGUSON, as she explains in the author's note to *Evenfield* (CAPE, 8/6), has taken "violent measures" to overcome the dilemma of all writers of chronicles and has written a tale about family life from the nineteen-hundreds to the nineteen-forties without mentioning war or letting her characters know about it. It is rather odd that though she uses first oil-stoves and hand-painted handkerchiefs, and then revue lyrics as dates, one does not notice the omission. But then, in spite of the lyrics, Miss FERGUSON's heroine, *Ara*, who tells the tale, is a hanker-back to the past. She begins with meals and treats at *Evenfield*, a big house in a small Thames-side town where the three *Morant* children live with their parents in a safe, comfortable and festive atmosphere. After they have moved to London, *Ara* hankers and mopes, visits and revisits until she manages to buy back the house, and makes it almost exactly as it was before. All this part is rather tiresome, but mercifully Miss FERGUSON (as well as *Ara*) sees that it is ridiculous for a sophisticated young woman to go so far towards recapturing the past as to play snakes-and-ladders in what was once her night-nursery. The book is intimately and pleasantly written: we enter a family on opening its covers, learn their "little language," make friends with their friends, forget all wars and are thoroughly braced at the end.

B. E. B.

Syrian Prelude

Letters from Syria (MURRAY, 9/-) are a gallant and girlish overture to Miss FREYA STARK's expert career as "British woman diplomat and author." They are also in their youthful distaste for the French rule of 1927-1929 an enlightening comment on Syria's immediate past, present and future. They open, rather like any other "letters home," with their writer's departure from the Veneto in a series of Mediterranean cargo-boats to learn colloquial Arabic. At Brumana, an uncomfortable little hill-town above Beirut, she put in three bitter winter months of study and local society; and with her first penetration—alone, on foot—of a Druse village, got well under way with her ambition "to think in Arabic." "That poor fringe of people between Islam and the sea," bandied about by the Great Powers and their own perpetual feuds, appreciated her genuine attitude of admirer and pupil. Everyone else came to rob or to improve—and it was hard to say which the Syrians resented most. Miss STARK's native predilections brought her to death's door in Damascus lodgings and got her practically imprisoned by a small French garrison at Shaba. But she succeeded in enjoying not only rare vestiges of historic Syria but the hospitality and confidence of city, village and desert.

H. P. E.

Two Letter-Writers

One could almost forgive Miss CASSANDRA AUSTEN for destroying her sister's letters if every other letter-writer had a Miss CASSANDRA AUSTEN. There is no better way of keeping a mystery potent than to maintain it, and everyone at heart believes himself a mystery. Expose all, and we have soon seen how little new was there. This is a tendentious introduction to *The Letters of J. M. Barrie*, edited by VIOLA MEYNELL (PETER DAVIES, 15/-), and rather an ungrateful one. The letters are nearly as enjoyable now as they must have been when fresh from the post. Witty, modest, playful, endlessly appreciative, and only once or twice a trifle sharp, they provide the expected portrait of the most amiable man on earth. Certainly no one else can have praised so much or been so pathetically grateful for affection.

It would have been cruel, one feels, not to answer by return. For it is not for nothing that the frontispiece represents the author alone, beside an empty grate. In spite of the number and brilliance of his friendships the letters read like those of a brilliant failure, a man who had early ceased to believe in his work and who had nothing, after the death of the boy to whom he was devoted, to put in its place.

More matter-of-fact and less self-revealing are *The Letters of Herbert Cardinal Vaughan to Lady Herbert of Lea* (BURNS OATES, 18/-). By an uncommon selflessness, or a mixture of dullness and devotion, these contrive to leave the writer in shadow while brilliantly, if fitfully, lighting up the character of Lady HERBERT. This indefatigable woman, the friend of FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE, always working, begging, writing, suffering, sending now "six dozen of claret and a hamper of game" and now a statue of a saint, dominates the book as effectually as if she had written it. And what of the Cardinal himself? Undoubtedly a great, competent, and busy man, but not in his letters very vivid. One finds oneself, regrettably, drowsing through the incessant planning, organization and discussion of a vast ecclesiastical business, to wake with a start at his description of himself, at Marienbad, "breakfasting daily on three or four pints of glauher salts." To non-Catholics the main interest of the book may lie in its revelation of the distrust with which Roman Catholicism was still generally regarded in England in the seventies. It appears there was sometimes ground for it; converts were frequent, even from Anglican rectories and convents, and an odd vein of what would certainly then have been called "intrigue" runs through the earlier letters.

J. S.

Mr. Punch brings to the notice of his readers A. P. HERBERT's *Well, Anyhow . . . or Little Talks* (METHUEN, 6/-); BASIL BOOTHROYD's *Adastral Bodies*, illustrated by C. F. GREATBACK (ALLEN AND UNWIN, 5/-); and ERNEST WATKINS's *No Depression in Iceland*, illustrated by KATE HALL (ALLEN AND UNWIN, 3/6).



"I'll take lamb."



"'Ullo! Another ruddy kingdom for a cab."

Tin Trunks

I'VE just been talking to a fellow," said Second-Lieutenant Sympson, "who has been out here in Africa for a couple of years, and he has some dreadful things to say about the white ants. A friend of his happened to leave his Service dress jacket on the table in his tent. He went out for a few hours and came back to find the jacket completely gone, and just a few white ants dashing madly about the table, apparently looking for the trousers."

"I don't believe it," said Niblet nervously. Niblet is one of those pessimistic subalterns who shave over-

night if they have to get up early, and never carry less than four pairs of braces. "I expect somebody had stolen the jacket."

"Impossible," said Sympson, "because the buttons and pips and badges were still lying in their correct positions on the table, and even the owner's fountain-pen was clipped to where the top pocket had been."

Personally I always take Sympson's

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

anecdotes with a grain of salt, but all the same I thought I might as well go back to the tent and see if there were any ants about. After a long search I found some, but they were brown ants, like ordinary English ones. I took a specimen to Sympson."

"That's a white ant, all right," said Sympson lugubriously. "Of course it doesn't look white, but naturally, living almost entirely on khaki uniforms, the little fellows soon get browned-off. And if you have found one you can bet there must be thousands."

"What can be done about it?" asked Niblet. "My uniform cost sixty pounds, besides the tropical kit and pyjamas and things."

Sympson waited until a few more anxious inquirers had gathered round him, and then spoke.

"Tin trunks," he said, "are the only solution. White ants laugh at leather. There is nothing like it, so far as they are concerned, and those of you who have fibre or cardboard suitcases can just write off all you possess as a dead loss."

"Can you buy tin trunks out here?" asked Niblet.

"They are practically unobtainable in Africa," said Sympson, "though I managed to get one myself yesterday from a fellow named Solomons in Springbok Road. He only had a couple left, and I expect they have been snapped up by now."

Nobody is allowed out of camp until noon, and there is always quite a crowd on the 12.15 train. On this particular day I recognized many of Sympson's friends, including, of course, Niblet. Personally I did not believe Sympson's story about the jacket, but my luggage has always been a tight fit in my suitcases, so I thought I might as well purchase a tin trunk.

There was quite a queue outside the shop of Mr. Solomons, and curiously enough they all wanted tin trunks, although they all scoffed at Sympson's story about the ants.

"It's the damp I'm afraid of," as Niblet said; "humid jungles, you know, and that sort of thing."

Luckily, Solomons had just received a further shipment of tin trunks, although, naturally, prices had gone up, so we were all able to get one.

Niblet happened to dine that night at the Hotel Imperial, and he was surprised to see Sympson (who is always short of cash) sitting at a table with two very pretty girls, all of them drinking champagne in great quantities.

Shortly afterwards they were joined by a man who, says Niblet, was either Mr. Solomon or his twin brother.

Our Xmas Targit

By Smith Minor

I'VE got to begin by letting you know that but for Green this article would never of been written. The whole idea was his from the start, and when I say that in my opinion it is the best he has ever had, even counting the following six, i.e.:

(1) A way of getting up a fallen horse by putting a seasaw under it;

(2) a barometre that strikes the weather like a clock, he still thinks it could be done;

(3) Green's Expanding Rabbit Hutsch;

(4) a pillar-box that, when you post a letter in it, stamps the envelope with the date as it goes down, this idea having been sent to the Post Master General, and still (we think) having his attention, we not having heard after seven months that it has yet stopped;

(5) Green's Egg-Roller, the egg

dropping straight from the hen on to a sort of sloping track that goes from the hen-house to the larder *via* the larder window, in that way you don't lose any;

(6) painting bald spots the same colour as such hair as yet remains. (Actually we thought of this together, I thinking of the painting and he of the same colour, I first thinking that if you made it a different colour it might make a bit of cheer, like some women's nails, but he thinking not, and I then thinking not, too.)

Well, you must admit, to improve on the above takes some doing.

It came about *comme ça*, as they say, or if they don't, could. I was wondering what to do about Xmas presents this year, because, (a) we are told not to spend anything, (b) I hadn't got much to spend, but (c) you must spend

something, when along came Green and said,

"You seem to be thinking, Smith."

"I am thinking," I said.

"That is unushuel," he said.

"You ought to try it sometimes," I said.

Of course we were both ragging, like one dose. Actually we both think a lot.

"What are you thinking about?" he said.

"How much to spend on Xmas presents, if any," I said.

"How much have you got?" he said.

"Thirteen and twopence," I said, "if Robinson pays me back fivepence."

"He won't," said Green, "so you'd better say twelve and ninepence. Why not spend the lot before Robinson borrows any more?"

"Because there's a war on," I said,



"I'm afraid I must have brought in my library book."

"and one's got to remember Lord Kindersleigh."

"So one has," he said. "What one now needs is a War Savings Flash." And the next moment he got one. "Why not a Christmas Targit?" he said.

"What would it cost," I said, "even if they'd all like one?"

"I don't mean Darts," he said, "I mean a Christmas Present Targit, like the Fule Targit?"

There you are! Every time you're stuck for an idea, go to Green, and he'll trundle one out! What the inside of his head must be like almost makes one gasp.

"My hat," I said, now cottoning on. "But how would it work?"

"The same way as it does for fule," he said, "only instead of having points for rooms you have points for people. How many people do you usually give presents to?"

"Eleven," I said, knowing.

"Well, at fifty points for each, that works out at five hundred and fifty, and say another fifty for Personal Allowance, that makes six hundred," he said.

"I see," I said, "only what is a point?"

"A farthing," he said.

We worked it out, he doing it first and winning.* The total was 12/6, which only left 3d. for Lord Kindersleigh, was that enough? I thort not.

"You can give up your Personal Allowance if you want to win a Haloe," said Green. "Then Lord Kindersleigh would get 1/3."

"I still don't think that's enough," I said, "and should the points be the same for all people?"

"I see what you mean," said Green, "we might save a bit more on second cousins, let's make out a table."

So we did, and after a lot of arguments which I won't weary the gentel reader with except to say that Green won five and I won two, this was it:

A Mother	60
A Father	50
A Brother	45
A Sister	40
Aunts	30
Uncles	20
Other Near Relations .	15
Semi-Distant Relations .	10
Distant Relations . .	2

* But I am better at Scripture. Author.

Ordinary Friends . .	12
Bosom Friends . .	60
Very poor people . .	100

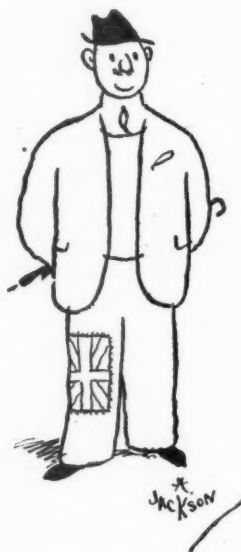
Of course we didn't mean you would have to keep to these exact figures, but saying you had one of each kind, your total points would then be whatever the above adds up to, and you could divide the points up just as you liked, as you do with gas and coal, etc. Who knows, you might like a Semi-Distant Relation, say, more than a Father, I've known it, in which case you could spend 50 points (1/0½) on the S.D.R. and only 10 points (2½) on the F., or even less.

Well, the next thing to do was to find out how many points my eleven people gave me, and I'll show you how it worked out because if you've got as far as this I think you'd want to know it, while if you don't want to know it you won't have got as far as this. This was my Xmas Targit, i.e.:

A Mother	60
A Father	50
5 Aunts at 30 each .	150
A Third Cousin . .	2
Arthur Todd (a boy) .	12
A Lame Man	100
Green	60

Total 434

which in "philthy luck," as they say, works out at 9/0½, leaving me 3/8½ for



War Bonds, or 4/1½ if Robinson pays me back.

"What are you going to send your third cousin with 2 points?" said Green. "A hapenny stamp?"

"I'm going to cut him out, like you do a bedroom," I said, "and also four aunts and Arthur Todd. That will give me 134 more points for the others. But, look here, what about *your* list, are you going to do it, too?"

"I expect I ought to," he said.

"I think we all ought to," I said. "Did you listen to Mr. Churchill's speech when he said we were beginning to win but had got to keep going or we mightn't, besides it's your idea."

(Note. We are beginning to win while I'm writing, even if we won't be while you're reading. End of note.)

"Yes, I wish I hadn't thort of it," said Green.

"No, you don't," I said, "you're as British as anyone, and you're jolly glad to have thort of an idea that may bring millions to the Nation's copher."

"Perhaps I am, if you put it like that," he said.

"Well, isn't that the way to put it?" I said.

"Yes," he said, "but if this is to be a real winner, you know what it means, old boy?"

"What, old man?" I said.

"Why, that we've got to drop leaflets about it," he said, "so other people will do it, too."

"You mean propergander?" I said.

"Yes," he said, "and it's a beastly swot."

"Well, I'll swot if you swot," I said.

"All right," he said, "but I still wish I hadn't thort of it."

But, just the same, he did swot, Green's not a slacker, and so did I, and believe it or not, between us we've spoken to 107 people about the Xmas Present Targit, and of these 107—

96 have said they won't.

10 " " " may.

I has " he will.

This makes three of us for certain, and if I get one reader, that will be four. So will you be the reader?

(Note. I got Green to read this through, as it was his idea, and he found that we'd left out Children from the list. He thort 80 for males and 70 for females would be about fair. End of note.)

Ditto article.

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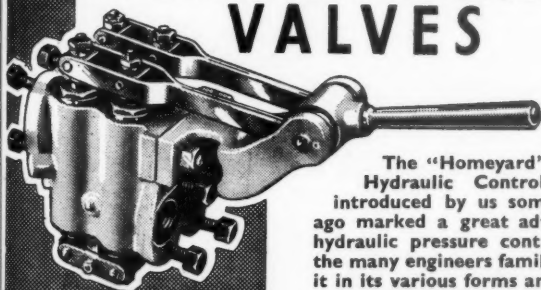
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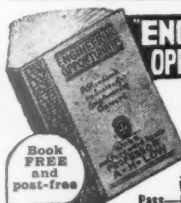
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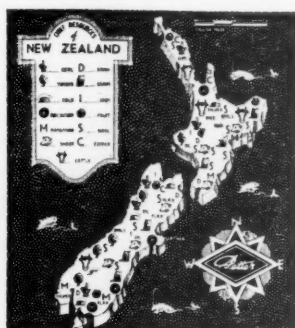
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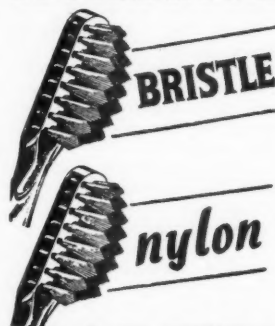
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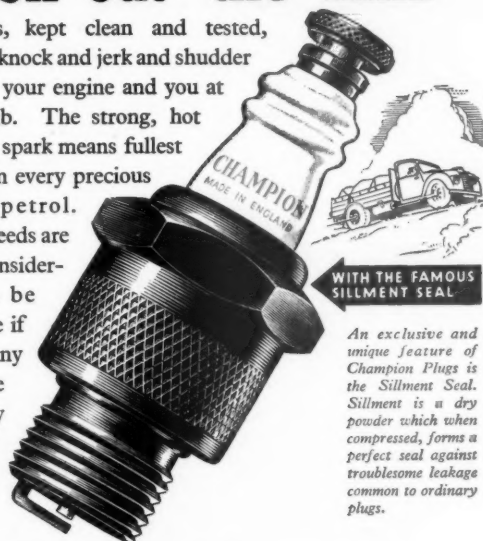


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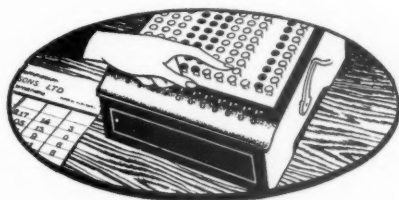


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